

Working Women in American Society
Department of Labor Studies and Employment Relations
Rutgers University
Spring 2024
37:575:309:01 & 01:988:309:01
Thursdays, 2:00pm-5:00pm
Lucy Stone Hall Building, Room B117

Instructor

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Course Description

This course is a deep exploration of intersecting and systemic inequalities that have impacted the lives of women workers historically and today. We will also examine how women have resisted labor exploitation. The first part of the course is an introduction to racial, class, and gender disparities in the US labor market and how women have addressed labor exploitation through varying forms of resistance. In the second part of the course, we will trace these historical roots of systemic inequalities into the present by analyzing their contemporary impact on women's working lives and how women are resisting labor injustices today.

*The syllabus is subject to slight changes during the semester.

Office Hours

Zoom appointments on Mondays and Wednesdays from 1:00-2:30pm, or by appointment in person.

Course Rationale: This special topic course takes an intersectional and historical approach to examine women's work experiences from the past until the present. Students who take this course must be prepared to deepen their writing, thinking, and reading of written and media source materials. Students must also demonstrate effective writing and communication skills. Women have and continue to engage in worker resistance in visual, media, and written forms. Thus, every student must have access to the internet and streaming services such as YouTube and Netflix. Some of the required materials for this course will require a low-cost subscription that can be canceled at any time after viewing the content.

Required Reading Materials

*All required reading and visuals materials are listed on Canvas.

*Some visual materials require purchase of a subscription to a streaming service. You can always cancel the subscription after viewing the films/documentaries.

Course Requirements:

Ice Breaker Assignment- 5%

Syllabus Quiz- 5%

Remix assignment(s)-10%

Weekly Facilitations- 15%

Responses to Facilitations- 15%

Paper 1- 25%

Paper 2 & Class Presentation – 25%

Goals and Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of the social injustices that have impacted women workers since the nineteenth century.
- Analyze how the current pandemic has impacted the health, family lives, and labor experiences of women workers
- Examine how intersecting racial, class, and gender inequalities have shaped the labor experiences of women historically
- Trace the ways in which racial, class, and gender disparities shape women workers' lives today.
- Explore women workers' organized resistance to labor exploitation historically and today.

Required Assignments

1 & 2- Ice Breaker and Syllabus Quiz

We will begin the course by introducing ourselves to each other and to the syllabus. Guidelines for the ice breaker activity and syllabus quiz are posted on Canvas.

3 & 4- Class Discussions and Facilitations:

All students are expected to begin each week of class prepared to share their interpretation, analysis and synthesis of assigned readings and media materials. Each week, a group of students will be responsible for co-facilitating class discussion with their own discussion questions. The group is also expected to post their discussion questions and commentaries about the assigned readings in advance of class discussion. This assignment will rotate each week. When you are not co-facilitating the discussion, you are expected to respond to the discussion questions.

Everyone was randomly divided into 3 small groups to create spaces where you can engage in deeper discussions about the readings than you can in a large lecture size class. You are a member of one of these three groups. Within those discussion groups, you are either a member of writing group A or B. Each week, the writing groups will rotate between serving as facilitators or responding to the facilitators' questions within the respective discussion groups. Facilitation commentaries and questions are due by **Tuesdays at 11:59pm**. Responses are due by **Wednesdays at 11:59pm**. We will discuss the facilitations and responses in class on Thursdays.

Check the "Writing Groups" file in Modules in Canvas to determine to which writing group you have been assigned.

Carefully read the guidelines and examples for facilitators and responses to facilitation questions in the Modules section on Canvas before writing your first facilitation commentary and response. The examples will provide you with the quality of work that is expected for each type of assignment and that adheres to the assignment rubrics.

The rubrics will be used to grade each weekly discussion board assignment. You can view the rubrics for all course assignments in the rubrics section in Canvas.

3- Remix Assignment(s)

Once or twice this semester we will convene online as an entire class to discuss documentaries and readings related to working women. We will do this to explore working women's experiences in multi-modal ways.

4- Paper 1

Students will submit a major paper prior to mid-semester to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of the information covered during the first half of the course. Guidelines will be announced.

5- Paper 2 and In Class Presentation

Students will submit a major paper 2 and deliver a class presentation based to demonstrate and apply comprehensive knowledge of the information covered throughout the entire course. Details will be announced.

Technical Assistance

This course will be conducted asynchronously via Canvas (occurring at different times rather than at the same place and time). Canvas can be accessed through <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/>. You can mark this URL as a bookmark in your computer system. Canvas is a course delivery system that provides private space on the web server that is used for members of this course. No one has access to the “space” except for those who are registered for the class. The space that is set aside for our course includes places to post comments and questions, access course grades, send email messages to your colleagues and me, view links to outside resources, and submit assignments.

To access the Canvas system, you’ll need a Rutgers user ID and password. If you have any difficulty accessing Canvas or course materials, contact Rutgers Canvas Help.

Support Website: <https://canvas.rutgers.edu/canvas-help/>

Email: help@oit.rutgers.edu Call: 833-648-4357

Access to Internet and Word Processing Software

You will need regular internet access to participate in this course. Although you do not need extensive experience with computers or the Internet, you need to have a basic familiarity with web browsing, personal computers, and the internet. You will need to make sure that your internet service provider and web browser will work together with Canvas. If you wish to participate in Canvas courses from your place of employment, this may be difficult if there are firewalls at your workplace. You also will need to use Microsoft Word to prepare and submit your written assignments. I am not responsible for grading assignments that I cannot open.

Email

Make sure that the email address listed for you in Canvas is the email address that you use and check regularly. You are responsible for checking the announcements board and your Canvas email regularly to stay in tune with the latest course developments. All emails sent to me must be sent through Canvas.

Rules of Engagement

Internet-based courses have unique opportunities and challenges. Our interactions in Canvas will be text-based and will be asynchronous (occurring at different times rather than at the same place and time). Since our written contributions in Canvas will be posted electronically and accessible to all participants, each of us have the opportunity to contribute to this course and respond to each other's contributions in more thoughtful and carefully considered ways than we might in face-to-face classroom sessions. We will also have the opportunity to refer back to what we have written in earlier weeks to build on our ideas throughout the semester.

We will *not* be able to make use of body language and other cues to help us interpret each other's words in Canvas. Therefore, responses that we post must be carefully written, thoughtful, and respectful. We'll need to pay attention to both what we say and how we say it. Your postings should be well-written with few or no typographical or grammatical errors.

Language and symbols commonly used in texting should not be used when posting in the Discussion Board forums. Before making any postings to the Discussion Board, you should read and follow the guidelines about "netiquette" (rules of online communication) found here:

<https://rlc.rutgers.edu/node/443>. This site also includes helpful tips for success in online courses.

Attendance Policy

Consistent and attentive participation multiple times a month is vital to academic success and expected of everyone in the course. Grades are determined by academic performance and the level and quality of participation. If you cannot participate in class discussions for more than one week because of a personal emergency, it is your responsibility to inform me. Three or more weeks of non-participation will likely result in a failing grade.

An incomplete may be granted if you have already completed 80 percent of the course assignments. Incomplete grades are not issued in this course unless you are unable to finish the course due to dire and extreme circumstances. Finally, you must provide strong evidence as to why you cannot register for the course when it is offered again. See Rutgers policy regarding incomplete grades here:

https://catalogs.rutgers.edu/generated/sph_current/pg34.html

Referrals

If you experience emotional distress during the semester, do not hesitate to contact medical and counseling services: <http://health.rutgers.edu/medical-counseling-services/counseling/>

Media Policy

The recording and transmission of classroom activities and discussions by students or faculty is prohibited without written permission from the class instructor and all students in the class. Class participants must have been informed that audio/video recording or reposting of forum contributions may occur. Recording of lectures or class presentations is solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The recording may not be reproduced or uploaded to publicly accessible web environments without written permission. You may not share any part of any recording without express written permission by all parties potentially affected by the recording.

Recordings, course materials, forum content, and lecture notes may not be exchanged or distributed for commercial purposes, for compensation, or for any other purpose other than study by students enrolled in the class. Public distribution of such materials may constitute copyright infringement in violation of federal or state law, or University policy. Violation of this policy may subject a student to disciplinary action under the University's Standards of Conduct.

Exception: It is not a violation of this policy for a student determined by the Learning Needs and Evaluation Center ("LNEC") to be entitled to educational accommodations, to exercise any rights protected under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, including needed recording or adaptations of classroom lectures or materials for personal research and study. Such recordings of lectures or class presentations are solely authorized for the purposes of individual or group study with other students enrolled in the same class. Permission to allow the recording is not a transfer of any copyrights in the recording or rights to ownership of content. The restrictions on third party web and commercial distribution apply in such cases.

Disability Services: Rutgers University welcomes students with disabilities into all of the University's educational programs. In order to receive consideration for reasonable accommodations, a student with a disability must contact the appropriate disability services office at the campus where you are officially enrolled, participate in an intake interview, and provide documentation:

<https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/documentation-guidelines>.

If the documentation supports your request for accommodations, your campus's disability services office will provide you with a Letter of Accommodations. Please share this letter with your instructors and discuss the accommodations with them as early in your courses as possible. To begin this process, please complete the Registration form on the ODS web site at: <https://ods.rutgers.edu/students/getting-registered>.

Academic Integrity Policy: All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to behave in an ethical and moral fashion, respecting the human dignity of all members of the community and resisting behavior that may cause danger or harm to others through violence, theft, or bigotry. All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to adhere to the civil and criminal laws of the local community, state, and nation, and to regulations promulgated by the University.

All members of the Rutgers University community are expected to observe established standards of scholarship and academic freedom by respecting the intellectual property of others and by honoring the right of all students to pursue their education in an environment free from harassment and intimidation. Please see <https://academicintegrity.rutgers.edu/> for details regarding the Academic Integrity Policy. Students are expected to refrain from cheating, fabricating information, plagiarizing, inappropriately denying others access to material, and facilitating others in academic dishonesty. Avoid plagiarism or other violations of academic integrity! Your written questions will be submitted to “Turnitin.com” to ensure that your answers are yours alone – not answers from another student, from the web, or another source. Be careful not to “copy” phrases or sentences excessively from the readings. The goal is to put the ideas into your own words. Plagiarism is the use of another person’s words, ideas, or results without giving that person appropriate credit. To avoid plagiarism, every direct quotation must be identified by quotation marks or appropriate indentation and both direct quotation and paraphrasing must be cited properly according to the accepted format for the particular discipline or as required by the instructor in a course. Students agree that by taking this course all required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review via Turnitin in Canvas.

Reading Schedule

Introduction: Dominant Narrative and Counternarratives

January 25th:

- Review syllabus and online course content carefully
- Read texts for “February 1st”
- Complete Syllabus Quiz (Deadline: Wednesday, January 22nd by 11:59pm)
- **View:** Kimberlé Crenshaw’s “On Intersectionality,” Keynote speech, <https://youtu.be/-DW4HLgYPIA>
- Complete Ice Breaker Activity (Deadline: Wednesday, January 22nd by 11:59pm)

Frameworks and Histories of Disparities in Labor and Quality of Life

February 1st:

Kimberlé Crenshaw, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." University of Chicago Legal Forum: Vol. 1989: Issue 1, Article 8, 138-167.

T. Lee & M. Tapia, "Confronting Race and other Social Identity Erasures: The Case for Critical Industrial Relations Theory," T. Lee, S. Davis-Faulkner, N. Williams, M. Tapia, eds. *A Racial Reckoning in Industrial Relations: Storytelling As Revolution from Within*. Labor and Employment Research Association Series, 2022.

February 8th: Women's Labors Post-Slavery

Tera Hunter, *To 'Joy My Freedom: Southern Black Women's Lives and Labors After the Civil War*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997. (**Prologue and Chapters 2 and 4**)

View: Henry Louis Gates, Jr., "Reconstruction: America After the Civil War" PBS Documentary, 2019, (Part 2, Hour 1)

After clicking on link below, click on red button that says "Watch Now." Type Rutgers University Libraries into the box under "Log in via your academic institution." Press enter. Lastly, log in using your Rutgers username and password to view the entire documentary.

https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cvideo_work%7C5067720?account_id=13626&usage_group_id=98189

February 15th: Whiteness, Blackness, Indigeneity & Working Women

Danielle Phillips-Cunningham, "Slaving" Irish Ladies and Black "Towers of Strength in the Labor World": Race and Women's Resistance in Domestic Service," *Women's History Review*, Special Issue: "Women, Work, and The State," (2020): 190-207.

Margaret Jacobs, "Diverted Mothering Among American Indian Domestic Servants," 179-192. In *Indigenous Women and Work: From Labor to Activism*, Carol Williams, ed. Champagne: University of Illinois Press, 2012.

View: Visual History of Indigenous Domestic Workers, *National Domestic Workers Alliance Project*.

***Begin reading from the link below. The section is entitled "The Outing System."**

Continue reading by clicking the right arrow and reading the following sections: "Menial Labor as Civilization," "Colonial Maternalism," "Inventing the Crime of Dancing," "Working in the City," "Motherhood Denied," and "Rebellion in the Outing Program."

<https://www.dwherstories.com/timeline/the-outing-system?prev=/timeline>

*Of course, you are welcome and encouraged to explore the entire site. We will discuss the above-mentioned sections in our class discussion.

February 22nd-- (Remixing Class)—Online Discussion

Revisiting Mexican(a) Labor History through Feminismo Transfronterista: From Tampico to Texas and Beyond, 1910–1940 Author(s): Sonia Hernández Source: *Frontiers: A Journal of Women Studies*, Vol. 36, No. 3, Special Issue: Transnational Feminisms (2015), pp. 107-136.

View: “Emma Tenayuca and the 1938 Pecan Shellers Strike,” Documentary, 2020.

<https://vimeo.com/480621468>

February 29th: Company Labor in the Jane Crow and Juan Crow Eras (Back to in-class discussions!)

Mary Church Terrell, “Peonage in the United States: The Convict Lease System and the Chain Gangs,” *The Nineteenth Century And After: A Monthly Review*. London: New Street Square Publishing (August 1907): 306-322.

“Like I Was a Man”: Chain Gangs, Gender, and the Domestic Carceral Sphere in Jim Crow Georgia Author(s): Sarah Haley Source: *Signs: The Journal of Women and Culture in Society*, Vol. 39, No. 1, Women, Gender, and Prison: National and Global Perspectives (Autumn 2013), pp. 53-77.

View: Mary Church Terrell: She was a Civil Rights Activist and Co-Founder of the NAACP, Public Broadcasting System Short Documentary, 2020.

<https://www.pbs.org/video/she-was-civil-rights-activist-and-co-founder-naacp-q3ypkj/>

March 7th: No class/Submit paper #1 via Canvas

March 14th: No class; Spring Break

Connecting The Dots: Historical Labor Disparities in the Present

March 21st: Intersectionality Today & Wage Gaps

Michelle Holder, “The ‘Double Gap’ and The Bottom Line: African American Women’s Wage Gap And Corporate Profits,” *Roosevelt Institute*. March 2020.

Jocelyn Frye, “On the Frontlines at Work and at Home: The Disproportionate Economic Effects of the Coronavirus Pandemic on Women of Color”

<https://www.americanprogress.org/issues/women/reports/2020/04/23/483846/frontlines-work-home/>, April 23, 2020.

Center for Women and Work, “COVID-19 & The Gender Wage Gap in New Jersey,” chrome-extension://efaidnbmnnnibpcajpcgclefindmkaj/https://smlr.rutgers.edu/sites/default/files/Documents/Centers/CWW/COVIDWageGap_FactSheet_March2022.pdf, March 2022.

March 28th: Teacher Strikes and Working Conditions

Wegner, Brown, Davis, Leyva, Puente. “Students walk out of schools across Nashville, demand gun reform in Covenant’s wake,” *Nashville Tennessean*. April 3, 2023.

[*Read article and view videos and photographs embedded in it.](#)

<https://www.tennessean.com/story/news/local/2023/04/03/covenant-school-protests-week-after-the-deadly-nashville-school-shooting/70076073007/>

Emily Wender and Alicia DeMille, “Becoming a Teacher in an Era of School Shootings,” *Issues in Teacher Education*. Fall 2019 (article in March 28th module on Canvas).

“Uvalde teacher speaks out about claims she left a door propped open during shooting,” *NBC News*, 2022.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A-RTWMfdMy4>

“In Chicago, striking teachers argue working conditions are key to improving schools,” October 2019,

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8D6F6PLZN8E>

April 4th: Migration and Poultry Plant Workers

“Injustice On Our Plates: Immigrant Women Working in the U.S. Food Industry,” *Southern Poverty Law Center Research Study*, 2010.

<https://www.splcenter.org/20101107/injustice-our-plates>

“Julie Su, Advocate for Immigrant Workers, is Biden’s Pick for Labor Secretary,”

<https://www.npr.org/2023/02/28/1160104766/biden-labor-secretary-nominate-julie-su>

Freshour, Carrie. “Cheap Meat, Cheap Work in the US Poultry Industry: Race, Gender, and Immigration in Corporate Strategies to Shape Labor,” in Elizabeth Ransom and Bill Winders eds., *Global Meat: Social and Environmental Consequences of the Expanding Meat Industry*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2019.

April 11th: No class; Wrap up your projects and prepare for presentations

April 18th: In class presentations (potluck)

April 25th: Submit paper and presentation slides via Canvas